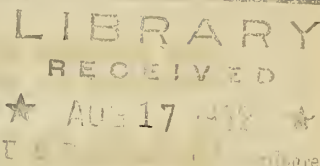


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR



Marketing for Summer Fruits and Vegetables

An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wells A. Sherman, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, August 2, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

Early in August generally comes the high point of the season for midsummer fruits and vegetables. So I've asked Mr. Wells A. Sherman of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to come up to the studio with me today and give you a quick review of the fresh fruit and vegetable market. You are already well acquainted with Mr. Sherman, and I'm sure many of you remember his talk on the fresh vegetable situation last March.

Mr. Sherman, it's a warm day, suppose we lead off this time with melons -- water melons, cantaloupes, honeydews. Can you give us good news of these summer favorites?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, melons are a bright spot in the summer fruit market. That is, bright for the consumer. There's a big crop of watermelons in Georgia, and in southeastern Missouri and southern Indiana. So prices of watermelons are low, and the growers are continuing to ship even though they sell their melons for only a little more than enough to pay the freight.

Most of the cantaloupes now on the market are a local product. The big cantaloupe section in California has ceased shipping for this summer, and it will be two weeks or so yet before carloads of Rocky Fords come from the irrigated districts of Colorado. So when you buy cantaloupes now, you are buying the best that nearby farms can produce. Remember that weather has a lot to do with the quality of cantaloupes. Melons thrive and grow sweet when there's lots of sunshine and fairly dry hot weather. Prolonged wet weather has a very bad effect on the quality of melons.

As for honeydews, the West coast will be shipping them right up to cold weather in the fall. With them as with most other foods, prices are below the level of recent years.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Sherman, now that you've told where our melons are coming from and that there are plenty more on the vines, I wish you could give us some pointers on how to choose them in the market. Some people tell me that buying melons is just too much of a lottery. They've given it up.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, you often do have to take a sporting chance on some kinds of melons. There's no way to prevent it. For cantaloupes and honeydews spoil so quickly once they get fully ripe, that they are likely to be picked rather green for shipment. One woman I know follows her sense of smell in choosing honeydews, honey balls, and cantaloupes. Of course, she also picks for the heaviest ones,

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and notices whether the skin shows signs of ripening. A heavy netting on cantaloupes is said to denote quality. Of course we all get fooled now and then.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Sherman, next on my list is peaches. So far this seems to me rather an off year for peaches.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, the peach crop is light in all the big orchards of the East and the Middle West. There are no cheap peaches in sight for this year, that is cheap in comparison with other abundant fruits. Last year Georgia had a record crop. This year it has only about one-fourth as many.

But when peaches are scarce more summer apples are always used. Yellow Transparent is now on the market, in many places, and from Michigan orchards come Duchess, an excellent quality summer apple. Also, there are several local summer varieties in all large markets. And California sends Gravensteins even across the Atlantic.

There are plenty of Bartlett pears coming from California, too. There's a heavy crop ready to meet a heavy demand. When it comes to quality, the Bartlett can hold its own with any other variety of pear and many people consider it the most delicious of all for eating raw. If I'm buying any quantity of Bartlett pears, I always try to get some that look rather green as well as a few that show more yellow than green. The yellowish ones are ready to eat at once; the greenish ones will turn yellow in a few days. Pears are one of the few fruits that are better ripened off the tree. The texture is better if they are picked somewhat green and allowed to ripen at room temperature. And as for the attractive red blush on the cheek of a Bartlett pear, it's another case of beauty being only skin deep. The pear is neither sweeter nor juicier for the high color on the outside. Russet coloring does no harm and does not affect the flavor but pears showing much russeted surface are usually cheaper.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Mr. Sherman, I know it's a long jump from Bartlett pears to onions, but can you tell us whether the onion supply is short again this year, as it was last winter?

MR. SHERMAN: No, Miss Van Deman, there is a big crop of onions, enough to satisfy everybody who wants them raw, boiled, French fried, or in savory soups and stews. Prices are so low in producing districts that growers are holding back all they can. Consumers who can use a 50-pound sack of onions can get them for very little more than the cost of freight and handling.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Now, what about sweet corn. It seems to me the corn we have had so far has not been very sweet.

MR. SHERMAN: You are quite right. All the green corn shipped to market from the Gulf States is field corn -- not sweet corn. The true sweet corn does not seem to do well in the South. But beginning about the middle of July real sweet corn can be had and from now until frost it should be abundant. If you want the best sweet corn get it from local growers. The sugar in corn begins to change to starch as soon as it's picked. Also, it is usually true that the further north sweet corn grows the sweeter it is. There is a good reason for this -- but that's another story. It takes cool nights with warm days to give sweet corn its best flavor. That is why the very latest plantings are often the sweetest.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, I'll admit that Golden Bantam corn grown up near the foot

of a certain mountain in New Hampshire is about the sweetest corn I ever tasted. But we all have our little prejudices on such matters.

Now, is there any other outstanding item in the vegetable market?

MR. SHERMAN: No, not for the country as a whole. Local gardens are producing well almost every where this year and there are abundant supplies of tomatoes, and cucumbers, and all the summer vegetables. Your local dealers can tell you when the peak comes for each home-grown produce.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Thank you, Mr. Sherman.

Next week the Household Calendar topic is Home Canning of Summer Vegetables, and Miss Mabel Stienbarger will be here with me.

Goodbye, for this time.

